

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS SURVEY DOCUMENTATION

PLACE ASCII Files

Place Level Residential Building Permit Statistics

Introduction

This file provides building permit statistics on new privately-owned residential construction. They are provided for individual permit-issuing jurisdictions.

File Formats

A. File Names

1. **Monthly Data** - Three monthly files are available for each of the 4 Census regions (NE, MW, SO, WE), current month data, year-to-date data, and monthly cumulative data. These are defined as follows:

- a. **Current month** - data tabulated for only that survey period.

File Name - <Region><YYMM>C.TXT, where "Region" is the 2-character abbreviation shown above and "YYMM" is the survey date; i.e. 9803. Example is NE9803C.TXT.

- b. **Year-to-Date monthly** - summed data from the beginning of the year through the current survey month including late reports and corrections for prior months.

File Name - <Region><YYMM>Y.TXT, where "Region" is the 2-character abbreviation shown above and "YYMM" is the survey date; i.e. 9803. Example is NE9803Y.TXT.

- c. **Monthly Cumulative** - monthly data records for each permit office from the beginning of the year through the current survey month including late reports and corrected data for prior months.

File Name - <Region><YYMM>R.TXT, where "Region" is the 2-character abbreviation shown above and "YYMM" is the survey date; i.e. 9803. Example is NE9803R.TXT.

2. **Annual Data** - Data tabulated for that survey year for each of four Census regions (NE, MW, SO, WE):

- a. **Annual summary data** - Annual data records for all permit offices.

File Name - <Region><YYYY>A.TXT, where "Region" is the 2-character abbreviation shown above and "YYYY" is the year. Example is NE1998A.TXT.

- b. Annual revised data - Monthly data records for all monthly reporting permit offices showing final data for each month of the year.

File Name - <Region><YYYY>R.TXT, where "Region" is the 2-character abbreviation shown above and "YYYY" is the year. Example is NE1998R.TXT.

B. Current month files and monthly cumulative files are ASCII, comma delimited files, providing:

1. Survey date, in the form "YYYYMM".
2. Two-digit FIPS state code.
3. Six-digit ID code (Census code to sort places alphabetically in a state.)
4. Three-digit FIPS county code.
5. Place Code
6. Four-digit FIPS CMSA or MSA code or "9999" if not in a CMSA or MSA.
7. Four-digit FIPS PMSA code or "9999" if not a PMSA.
8. Central City
9. Zip Code
10. One-digit Census region code.
11. One-digit Census division code.
12. Source code identifying source of data as shown:
 - 1 Building Permits C-404 survey form.
 - 2 Received entire report by telephone.
 - 3 Received residential data by telephone, imputed nonresidential data.
 - 4 Received residential data from Survey of Construction, imputed nonresidential data.
 - 5 No report received, imputed data.
 - 9 No report received and no imputed data.
13. Blank field.
14. Alpha place name.
15. Buildings, units and valuation permit data (estimates with imputation).

See Attachment A for a complete record layout.

C. Year-to-date and annual files are ASCII, comma delimited files, providing:

1. Survey date, in the form "YYYYMM" (annual files show a date of "YYYY").
2. Two-digit FIPS state code.
3. Six-digit ID code (Census code to sort places alphabetically in a state.)
4. Three-digit FIPS county code.
5. Place Code
6. Four-digit FIPS CMSA or MSA code or "9999" if not in a CMSA or MSA.
7. Four-digit FIPS PMSA code or "9999" if not a PMSA.
8. Central City
9. Zip Code
10. One-digit Census region code.
11. One-digit Census division code.
12. Number of months of reported residential data.
13. Blank. (Old files contain the number of months of reported nonresidential data, please ignore this data.)
14. Alpha place name.
15. Buildings, units and valuation permit data (estimates with imputation).
16. Buildings, units and valuation permit data (reported only).

Note: Two sets of data are shown for each type of construction:

1. Estimates with Imputation - includes reported data for monthly respondents and imputed data for nonrespondents.
2. Reported Only - includes only reported data for respondents.

See Attachment B for a complete record layout.

D. Historic listings have various footnotes appended to some permit office names as follows:

(N) - Permit-issuing places identified since the 19,000-place universe was established in 1994 (selection actually took place in July 1993); activity for these places is not included in summary statistics.

- See explanatory footnote.

@1 - The State of Montana, Department of Commerce, Building Codes Bureau issues the building permits for residential buildings with 5 units or more and all nonresidential buildings. Permits are not required for residential buildings with 1 to 4 units.

@2 - Permits are issued by both the State of Montana, Department of Commerce, Building Codes Bureau and the local jurisdiction. These data are based on permits issued by the local jurisdiction and include residential building with 1 to 4 units.

@3 - Permit system called "County Part" covers residential construction of four or more family buildings and commercial construction for the entire county. Permits for places listed separately only cover the construction of one, two and three family buildings.

@4 - Permit system covers the construction of one, two and three family buildings.

@5 - Permit system only covers the construction of one and two family buildings.

Source of Data

Statistics provided in these files are based upon reports submitted by local building permit officials in response to a mail survey. If an official fails to respond and the permit-issuing place is in our Residential Permit Use Survey (SUP), then the residential housing unit data are obtained from that survey. The SUP (a component of the Survey of Construction) is a survey in which interviewers go to approximately 850 selected permit offices and list data from each building permit that authorizes construction of new residential housekeeping buildings. If no report is received and the place is not in SUP, then all data items are imputed.

Geographic Coverage of Building Permit Jurisdiction

Most of the permit-issuing jurisdictions are municipalities; the remainder are counties, townships, or unincorporated towns. For the municipalities, and townships or towns, the area subject to building permit requirements to which the figures pertain is normally that of the governmental jurisdictions. A small number of municipalities have authority to issue building or zoning permits for areas extending beyond their corporate limits. In such cases, the data relate to the entire area within which the permit-issuing authority is exercised. Similarly, a small number of townships issue permits for only a part of the township and the data normally covers only the area subject to the township's permit system.

Limitations of Data

The portion of construction measurable from building permit records is inherently limited since such records obviously do not reflect construction activity outside of the area subject to local permit requirements. For the nation as a whole, less than 5 percent of all privately owned housing units built are construction in areas that do not require building permits.

The reported statistics are also influenced by the following factors:

1. Some building permit jurisdictions close their books a few days before the end of the month/year, so that the time reference for permits is not, in all cases, strictly the calendar month/year.
2. A study spanning 4 years showed that about 3 percent of the single-family houses built in permit-issuing places are built without a permit.

To the extent that most of these limiting factors apply rather consistently over an extended period, they may not seriously impair the usefulness of building permit statistics as prompt indicators of trends in residential construction activity.

Questions should be directed to Manufacturing and Construction Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 20233-6900. Phone: (301) 457-1321.

Attachment A

Record Layout of Building Permits Place Level
ASCII Customer Data File - Current Month & Monthly Cumulative

| Field | Description |
|-------|----------------------|
| 1 | Survey Date; YYYYMM |
| 2 | FIPS state code |
| 3 | 6-digit ID code |
| 4 | FIPS county code |
| 5 | Place code |
| 6 | FIPS CMSA/MSA code |
| 7 | FIPS PMSA code |
| 8 | Central City |
| 9 | Zip Code |
| 10 | Census Region code |
| 11 | Census Division code |
| 12 | Source code |
| 13 | Blank |
| 14 | Place Name |

Reported and Imputed Data

| | |
|----|---------------|
| 15 | 101-Buildings |
| 16 | 101-Units |
| 17 | 101-Valuation |
| 18 | 103-Buildings |
| 19 | 103-Units |
| 20 | 103-Valuation |
| 21 | 104-Buildings |
| 22 | 104-Units |
| 23 | 104-Valuation |
| 24 | 105-Buildings |
| 25 | 105-Units |
| 26 | 105-Valuation |

Attachment B

Record Layout of Building Permits Place Level ASCII Customer Data File - Year-to-Date and Annual

| Field | Description |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Survey Date; YYYYMM |
| 2 | FIPS state code |
| 3 | 6-digit ID code |
| 4 | FIPS county code |
| 5 | Place code |
| 6 | FIPS CMSA/MSA code |
| 7 | FIPS PMSA code |
| 8 | Central City |
| 9 | Zip Code |
| 10 | Census Region code |
| 11 | Census Division code |
| 12 | Number of Months Reported - Res |
| 13 | Blank. (Old files contain number of months reported - nonres, please ignore.) |
| 14 | Place Name |

Reported and Imputed Data

| | |
|----|---------------|
| 15 | 101-Buildings |
| 16 | 101-Units |
| 17 | 101-Valuation |
| 18 | 103-Buildings |
| 19 | 103-Units |
| 20 | 103-Valuation |
| 21 | 104-Buildings |
| 22 | 104-Units |
| 23 | 104-Valuation |
| 24 | 105-Buildings |
| 25 | 105-Units |
| 26 | 105-Valuation |

Reported Only Data

| | |
|----|---------------|
| 27 | 101-Buildings |
| 28 | 101-Units |
| 29 | 101-Valuation |
| 30 | 103-Buildings |
| 31 | 103-Units |
| 32 | 103-Valuation |
| 33 | 104-Buildings |
| 34 | 104-Units |
| 35 | 104-Valuation |
| 36 | 105-Buildings |
| 37 | 105-Units |
| 38 | 105-Valuation |